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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20054

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FILE

In the Matter of )  
Administration of the ) CC Docket No. 92-237  
North American Numbering Plan )

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF  
VANGUARD CELLULAR SYSTEMS, INC.

Vanguard Cellular Systems, Inc. ("Vanguard") submits Comments to the Notice of Inquiry ("NOI") concerning the administration of the North American Numbering Plan ("NANP").

1. Vanguard is the third largest purely non-wireline cellular telephone system operator in the United States, owning or controlling the Federal Communications Commission non-wireline licensees in 21 MSA's and RSA's on the East Coast, which licensees collectively serve over 100,000 subscribers. Vanguard's stock is publicly traded on the NASDAQ National Market System. Vanguard is a member of the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association ("CTIA"), which is the trade association of the cellular industry.

2. In paragraph 20 of the NOI, the Commission invites comments on the advisability of transferring NANP administration to an integrated centralized administrator other than Bell Communications Research ("Bellcore"). Vanguard supports the transfer of NANP administration to an integrated centralized

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administrator. This administrator could be a private, nonprofit agency, or an independent quasi-governmental agency.

3. As set forth in paragraph 4 of the NOI, the numbering scheme for the nation's telephone system was developed by the Bell System, and was transferred to Bellcore by AT&T when AT&T divested its operating companies on January 1, 1984, before most cellular licenses were ever issued. Bellcore is owned by the seven Regional Bell Operating Companies ("RBOC's"), the same companies which own the traditional landline telephone companies. The RBOC's, through subsidiaries, own the wireline cellular systems and compete directly with many of Vanguard's non-wireline cellular systems. The party responsible for the administration of the NANP has an extremely important and grave responsibility to oversee the allocation of Number Plan Area Codes ("NPA codes"), which are a limited national resource, in the public interest. Cellular system customers deserve the same benefits derived from the assignment of NPA codes as customers of traditional landline telephone service. It is unquestionable that the administration of the NANP by an arm of the RBOC's appears to create a bias in favor of the landline customer. Since it is imperative that the administrator of the NANP not have even an appearance of impropriety, Vanguard supports the transfer of NANP administration.

4. At present Vanguard's nearly 100,000 cellular customers, and the over 10 million cellular customers nationwide, are being

injured by the lack of a coherent, consistent system for the allocation of NPA and NXX codes. As an example, recently Thomas E. Wheeler, President of CTIA, wrote a letter to the NANP Administration ("NANPA") at Bellcore on behalf of the United States cellular telecommunications industry. In his letter, Mr. Wheeler requested that NANPA assign non-geographic area codes to wireless telecommunications carriers based upon a uniformly applicable set of guidelines. The letter pointed out that although NANPA had not agreed to assign codes to existing cellular subscribers, it had indicated that it would assign codes for personal communications services to AT&T. Such action by NANPA represents gross mismanagement of NANP to the detriment of cellular customers.

5. In less than 10 years, the number of cellular subscribers in the United States has grown from none to over 10 million. The cellular industry is unquestionably on the cutting edge of technology, and has brought untethered telecommunications service to areas of the country that have never before had any such service, for example, our interstate highways. It is precisely this fast moving, innovative industry that should be the first to receive non-geographic area codes. Yet its request for these codes has been ignored, while additional codes have been promised to be issued to other parties at the unjustified whim of NANPA.

6. There are various forms that the private, nonprofit

agency or independent quasi-governmental agency could take. The private, nonprofit agency would have to be a demonstrably independent agency, and its governance could be overseen by a board of directors or trustees representing a broad array of business, governmental, consumer and nonprofit interest groups. Special emphasis should be placed upon representation on the board by high-profile, qualified experts in various areas of advanced computer, telecommunications and other technologies. The goal in developing this type of agency should be to make the administration as streamlined as possible to avoid excess bureaucracy that would slow down the administration of assignment of numbers under the NANP. Similarly, a quasi-governmental agency, if created in these days of severe financial limitations, should be as streamlined as possible. The agency administrators should represent a broad array of business, consumer and nonprofit interest groups. Whatever the form of the agency, the members of the board or the administrators of the agency should be invited to participate subject to their firm commitment to discharge their duties in an unbiased, independent manner with a goal to further the public interest, which includes special attention to accommodating the needs of new and quickly evolving telecommunications technologies and businesses, such as the cellular industry.

7. The costs of administration could be funded through a small charge per month to landline, cellular and other users of telephone numbers, perhaps as little as \$0.01 per month per user.

Respectfully submitted,

VANGUARD CELLULAR SYSTEMS, INC.

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By: Richard C. Rowlenison (h, RES)  
Richard C. Rowlenison,  
Senior Vice President and  
General Counsel

By: Philip E. Smith  
Philip E. Smith,  
Assistant General Counsel